



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Exploration and Discovery.

THE January *Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund* contains the first report of Dr. F. J. Bliss upon the excavations he is making at Tell Zakariha, an isolated hill rising abruptly almost three hundred feet above the vale of Elah. Dr. Bliss is not yet ready to take any very decided position upon the identification of the Tell. Possibly it may be Gath. Thus far he has taken out fifty thousand cubic feet of soil and finds that the number of antiquities compares most favorably with the proportion of Tell-el-Hesi. They include stone implements, various articles of iron and bronze, a jar containing over eighty carnelian beads of various shapes, several figured and unfigured scarabs apparently of the eighteenth dynasty, a stone seal, and three coins, as well as a few small Egyptian figures.

DR. SCHICK gives in the same number an interesting account of Abraham's oak at Hebron. In 1847, when he first saw the tree, it seemed sound and flourishing. Fifteen years later it was evidently decaying. A large branch had been broken off, and now only one branch is alive. The tree now belongs to the Russian archimandrite of Jerusalem.

IN the *Sunday School Times* of January 28 Professor Hilprecht has the following note :

The German Orient Society has selected the ruins of Babylon, the capital of the united Babylonian empire from the days of Hammurabi (the biblical Amraphel, Genesis, chap. 14), as the place of its operation. The expedition planned will be in charge of the well-known German architect R. Koldewey, who was prominently connected with the Berlin excavations at the Babylonian ruins of Surghul and El Hibba (1886-7), and at the Hittite ruins of Senjirli in northern Syria (1890, 1891, 1894). Dr. Bruno Meissner, of the university of Halle, will accompany the expedition as Assyriologist. Nothing is yet definitely known as to the time when the expedition will start; doubtless as soon as the firman, for which application has been made in Constantinople, is granted, and all necessary preliminaries have been arranged satisfactorily. These extended ruins will require at least fifty years of labor, if they are to be excavated as thoroughly and systematically as the work is done by the American expedition at Nippur, which has employed in its trenches never less than sixty, but frequently from two hundred to four hundred, Arabic workmen at the same time during the last ten years. Certain parts of the

ruins of Babylon have been previously explored and excavated by Layard, Rawlinson, and the French expedition under Fresnel and Oppert, to which we owe the first accurate details of the topography of this ancient city. So far as the comfort and safety of its expedition from fever and marauding Arabs is concerned, the Orient Society could have chosen no better place. And the rapid decay and change of the ruins of Babylon, parts of which have been used as the public quarries for centuries, and particularly recently in connection with the construction of the Hindiyeh canal by the Ottoman government, make it a sacred duty to the German government, to its learned societies, and to all intelligent individuals to encourage methodical work at these important ruins in every possible way.

AN interesting running debate on the causes and manner of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha, and the tetrapolis on the southern borders of the Dead Sea, has been carried on for some time by some German specialists, especially by Dr. Max Blankenhorn, of the university of Erlangen, and Professor C. Diener, of Vienna. The latest contribution on the subject is by the former in the *Zeitschrift* of the German Palestine Society, Vol. XXI, Heft 2, pp. 65-83. Diener's chief contributions are found in the *Mittheilungen* of the Geographical Society of Vienna, 1897, Nos. 1 and 2, and are entitled "Die Katastrophe von Sodom und Gomorrha im Lichte geologischer Forschung." An earlier article by Blankenhorn had appeared in the *Zeitschrift*, Vol. XIX, pp. 1 ff., and its interests can be seen in the title: "Entstehung und Geschichte des Todten Meeres, ein Beitrag zur Geologie Palästinas." The debate is thus chiefly a discussion between two geologists, both of whom are recognized as authorities on the immediate subject under consideration. It is charged against Diener that he permits his apologetic interests for Genesis to influence his views of the destruction of these cities, and that he is seeking for an explanation that will satisfy the particulars of the description as given in Genesis. Blankenhorn, who denies the historical character of the description in question, is under no such necessity. He himself formulates the difference between the two views (p. 70) by stating that both Diener and he proceed from the standpoint that the catastrophe was the result of an earthquake but that, while he regards this as of a tectonic character, which Diener denies, Blankenhorn thinks that the earthquake caused the sinking of the surface or crust of the earth to the level of the sea, while Diener claims that there was a seismic "blow" (*Schlag*), and that this resulted in "pressing the foundation waters out of the alluvial soil," and that the latter accordingly sank, which explains the change of the valley of Siddim into a salt morass.